

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-13

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 OMB-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03

INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03

SS-20 USIA-15 SAM-01 CU-04 AID-20 OPR-02 IO-14 A-01

SY-10 PC-10 EB-11 AGR-20 DRC-01 /186 W

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R 111130Z FEB 74

FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9623

INFO AMCONSUL BOMBAY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 NEW DELHI 2038

PORTIONS OF THE FOLLOWING TEL SENT ACTION NEW DELHI INFO
CALCUTTA MADRAS FROM BOMBAY DTD 11 FEB IS RPTD:

QUOTE

BOMBAY 0335

E.O. 11652 N/A

TAGS: PINT, PINS, IN

SUBJ: PRESIDENT'S RULE IMPOSED IN GUJARAT

1. SUMMARY. TO THE UNCONCEALED JOY OF GUJARAT'S CITIZENRY
THE TOTTERING CHIMANBHAI PATEL MINISTRY FINALLY COLLAPSED ON
SATURDAY 9TH AND PRESIDENT'S RULE WAS IMPOSED LATER THAT
EVENING (9 PM) THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY WAS SUSPENDED
AND NOT DISSOLVED.

2. CONFRONTED WITH A WIDESPREAD POPULAR UPRISING WHICH WAS
RAPIDLY GETTING OUT OF CONTROL AND AN OPEN REVOLT WITHIN HIS
CABINET, CHIMANBHAI TABLED HIS RESIGNATION AT 4 PM ON THE
9TH FOLLOWING ADVICE FROM THE CENTER THAT HE DO SO. ALTHOUGH
THE CONGRESS HIGH COMMAND HAD TRIED TO KEEP THE PATEL
MINISTRY AFLOAT, PRESUMABLY UNTIL AFTER THE U.P. ELECTIONS
ITS HAND WAS FINALLY FORCED BY THE WHOLESALE DESERTION OF
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GUJARATI CABINET MINISTERS TO JOIN THE POPULAR REVOLT AND

THE DISINTEGRATION OF GOVERNMENTAL AUTHORITY AND CONTROL. THE LAST STRAWS WERE MIN OF EDUCATION BAROT'S RESIGNATION ON 8TH AND DEPUTY CHIEF MIN KANTILAL GHIA'S ANNOUNCEMENT ON 9TH THAT HE AND 3 OF HIS MINISTERIAL COLLEAGUES WERE QUITTING. PATEL'S RESIGNATION CAME A MONTH AFTER GUJARAT'S FOOD RIOTS BEGAN RIOTS IN WHICH HE BECAME INCREASINGLY THE FOCAL POINT AND TARGET OF POPULAR WRATH. AND SO PATEL, WHO CAME TO POWER LAST JULY 17 AFTER LEADING AN INTRA-PARTY REVOLT THAT TOPPLED OZA WAS TOPPLED IN TURN AND BY MEN LIKE AMUL DEAI WHO HAD ASSISTED HIM TO TOPPLE OZA. (SUCH IS THE STUFF OF WHICH GUJARATI AND INDIAN POLITICS IS ALL TOO OFTEN MADE.

3. EVENTS MOVED SWIFTLY IN GUJARAT OVER THIS PAST WEEK-END GOI LAW MIN GOKHALE'S MISSION TO TRY AND INITIATE A DIALOGUE BETWEEN THE STATE GOVT AND THE STUDENTS AND TEACHERS NEVER GOT OFF THE GROUND. WHILE GOKHALE WAS HAVING TALKS WITH TEACHERS AND STUDENTS AT GOVERNOR'S HOUSE ON 8TH AN UNDERGROUND LEADER OF THE STUDENT GROUP, NAVNIRMAN YUVAK SAMATI, WAS BROUGHT THERE TO MEET HIM. THE STUDENT LEADER WAS ARRESTED ON ARRIVAL TOUCHING OFF A STUDENT PROTEST ENDING WITH POLICE LATHI CHARGE. MIN ED BAROT HAD REQUESTED STUDENTS TO SEND A DELEGATION OF UNDERGROUND LEADERS TO SEE BOKHALE AND LATTER GAVE ASSURANCES THAT ALL STUDENTS DETAINED UNDER MISA WOULD BE SET FREE FOR 48 HOURS AND NO FRESH ARRESTS WOULD BE MADE IN ORDER TO FACILITATE MEETINGS. STUDENT LEADERS FINALLY RELEASED ALTHOUGH MIN ED BAROT MAN HANDLED IN PROCESS. LATTER TABLED HIS RESIGNATION WITH GOVERNOR ON THE SPOT IN PROTEST OF POLICE BRUTALITY. ON 8TH AS WELL EMPLOYEES OF GUJARAT GOVT TOOK DECISION THEY WOULD JOIN ANTI-GOVT AGITATION FROM 11TH IF "THE PRESENT CORRUPT MINISTRY DOESN'T GO WITHIN 24 HOURS." FINAL STRAW WAS ANNOUNCEMENT BY DEPUTY CHIEF MIN GHAI THAT HE AND 3 OF HIS MINISTERIAL COLLEAGUES WERE QUITTING. ACCORDING PRESS GOKHALE MET WITH UNION CABINET PAC FOLLOWING HIS RETURN TO DELHI AND AFTER GETTING IN TOUCH WITH PM, CALLED CHIMANBHAI AFTERNOON 9 TH AND TOLD HIM IT WOULD BE BETTER TO STEP DOWN.

3. IN SPEAKING TO PRESS CHIMANBHAI QUOTED AS SAYING HE
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HAD DECIDED RESIGN IN THE "LARGER INTERESTS" OF GUJARAT AND POINT OUT THAT HE STILL COMMANDED MAJORITY IN THE LEGISLATIVE WING OF PARTY AND WAS STILL ITS LEADER (A POSITION WITH WHICH DISSIDENTS TOOK IMMEDIATE ISSUE). HE ATTACKED HIS OPPONENTS AND SAID THERE DESIRE TO BENEFIT BY HIS RESIGNATION "WILL BE FRUSTRATED" HE ALSO CHARGED PRES GPCC DARJI WITH FANNING THE AGITATION. COMMENT: FACTIONAL IN-FIGHTING IS LIKELY TO REMAIN A PERMANENT FEATURE OF THE CONGRESS PARTY

SCENE IN GUJARAT.
SCHNEIDER

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FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9624

INFO AMCONSUL BOMBAY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 NEW DELHI 2038

4. AFTER CHIMANBHAI'S RESIGNATION AND AS JUBILANT CROWDS
TOOK TO STREETS TO CELEBRATE, FRESH RIOTS ERUPTED IN AHMEDABAD
AND BARODA THE EVE OF THE 9TH IN WHICH 4 KILLED IN POLICE
FIRINGS TO DISPERSE MOBS, THREE IN AHMEDABAD AND ONE IN
BARODA, BRINGING TO 50 OFFICIAL DEATH TOLL THUS FAR. ALTHOUGH
EARLIER REPORTS INDICATED THAT SITUATION HAD BEEN BROUGHT UNDER
CONTROL, THERE WERE FRESH OUTBURSTS OF VIOLENCE ON 10TH
COINCIDING WITH VICTORY CELEBRATIONS THROUGHOUT THE DAY IN
AHMEDABAD AND BARODA AND ELSEWHERE WITH A NUMBER INJURED.
THE ARMY REPORTEDLY FIRED TWICE IN AHMEDABAD ON 10TH.
WHILE SOME OF DEMONSTRATORS CALLED DISSOLUTION OF
ASSEMBLY AND PROTESTED POLICE EXCESSES, IT STILL TOO EARLY
TO IDENTIFY PRECISELY TARGETS IN NEW ROUND VIOLENCE. STUDENTS'
NAVNIRMAN YUVAK SAMITI, FOR EXAMPLE, ANNOUNCED IT WITHDRAWING
ITS AGITATION.

5. "INDIAN EXPRESS" IN ITS LEAD EDITORIAL TODAY STATES "THERE
HAVE BEEN FEW CASES OF BLATANT AS THAT OF GUJARAT WHERE THE
INTERESTS OF THE PEOPLE HAVE BEEN SO TRANSPARENTLY SUBORDINATED
TO THOSE OF THE PARTY IN POWER". ADDS THAT IT WAS PLAIN TO
EVERYBODY THAT THERE HAS EXISTED FOR WEEKS IN GUJARAT WHAT

AMOUNTED TO A BREAKDOWN OF CONSTITUTIONAL AUTHORITY BROUGHT ABOUT BY A STATEWIDE DEMONSTRATION OF POPULAR REJECTION OF THE CONFIDENTIAL

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GOVERNMENT, " A DEMONSTRATION SO MASSIVE THAT CONGRESSMEN AT ALL LEVELS INCLUDING THE CABINET JOINED THE REVOLT". EDITORIAL GOES ON TO CRITICIZE GOI FOR FAILING DISSOLVE ASSEMBLY SAYING PEOPLE HAVE DEMONSTRATED THEIR COMPLETE LACK OF CONFIDENCE IN STATE GOVERNMENT AND PARTY RESONSIBLE FOR IT. "THE LEAST THE PEOPLE HAVE EARNED IS THE OPPORTUNITY FOR EXPRESSION OF THEIR WILL."

6. COMMENT: WHAT WE HAVE WITNESSED IN GUJARAT OVER PAST MONTH (JAN 10-FEB 10) HAS BEEN A TRULY POPULAR REVOLT CHARACTERIZED BY ITS SPONTANEITY AND ABSENCE OF ANY OVERALL ORGANIZATIONAL DIRECTION. STUDENTS FOR THE MOST PART PROVIDED THE LEADERSHIP THROUGHOUT GUJARAT AND THEY HAVE NOW TASTED "STUDENT POWER". IT WAS A REVOLT THAT SUCCEEDED IN BRINGING DOWN A CONGRESS GOVT IN A STATE IN WHICH THE RULING PARTY HOLDS A MASSIVE LEGISLATIVE MAJORITY AND DESPITE THE EFFORTS OF THE CENTRAL LEADERSHIP TO SUSTAIN THAT GOVT UNTIL AT LEAST AFTER THE U.P. ELECTIONS. IN REJECTING THEIR GOVT, THE PEOPLE OF GUJARAT MADE CLEAR THAT THEY WERE SICK OF POLITICS FOR THE SAKE OF POLITICS AND THAT THEY WANTED AN HONEST GOVT AND ONE THAT WOULD DEVOTE ITS EFFORTS TO DEALING WITH FOOD SHORTAGES AND RISING PRICES.

7. IT DOES NOT AUTOMATICALLY FOLLOW, HOWEVER, THAT THE ELIMINATION OF CHIMANBHAI PATEL AND IMPOSITION OF PRESIDENT'S RULE WILL BRING PEACE TO GUJARAT. WHILE IT MAY PERHAPS BRING A BRIEF RESPITE, THE ROOT CAUSES OF THE REVOLT--FOOD SHORTAGES AND RISING PRICES--STILL REMAIN AND WILL NOW HAVE TO BE DEALT WITH BY THE GOI. UNLESS THE LATTER DOES SO EFFECTIVELY AND QUICKLY, POPULAR UNREST CAN BE EXPECTED TO CONTINUE. THE DISSOLUTION OF THE ASSEMBLY AND POLICE EXCESSES WILL ALSO LIKELY CONTINUE TO FIGURE PROMINENTLY IN POPULAR DEMANDS. WE ARE NOT OUT OF THE WOODS YET.

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